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Testimony of Planned Parenthood of Southern New England
in support of raised Senate Bill 991, *An Act Concerning Medicaid Reimbursement for*
Community Health Workers
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Senator Lesser, Representative Gilchrest and honorable members of the Human Services Committee, my name is Gretchen Raffa, Vice President of Public Policy, Advocacy and Organizing at Planned Parenthood of Southern New England (PPSNE) testifying in support of raised Senate Bill 991, *An Act Concerning Medicaid Reimbursement for Community Health Workers*. As the state's largest provider of family planning and sexual and reproductive health care to over 50,000 patients last year at 14 health centers across the state, Planned Parenthood believes all people should have access to quality, affordable, and compassionate health care as a basic human right — regardless of who you are, where you live, your income, if you have health insurance or your immigration status.

Currently, Connecticut's Medicaid program does not reimburse Community Health Worker (CHW) services or incentivize health care providers to work with CHWs. Community health workers are an effective way to address inequities and promote health, particularly for low-income households served by Medicaid.

CHW services may include health promotion and education, patient outreach and follow-up, assistance in navigating the health care system, translation and interpretation services, and care coordination and case management. CHWs can facilitate connections and greater trust between the community and health care systems.ⁱ

At PPSNE we see firsthand how important patient navigators are to the patients we serve. Our patient navigation need has grown tremendously because of our patients' needs in the areas of sexual and reproductive health care, abortion care, gender affirming care, behavioral health care, primary care, and linkage to care for substance misuse. PPSNE patients need help navigating and finding care, getting enrolled into insurance, and advocating for their needs and our four patient navigators have assisted close to 2000 patients with this care coordination.

Medicaid reimbursement for community health workers should:

- Center community and CHW voices in all stages of design and implementation
- Reimburse at rates high enough to employ CHWs at a livable wage and cover the costs of supervision, billing, and routine training
- Cover a comprehensive list of CHW services

We strongly urge the committee to vote in support of S.B. 991 as one policy intervention to address health inequities in our state. Planned Parenthood will continue to fight for policies that protect the rights of all people to ensure our patients and communities have what they need to live healthy and self-determined lives. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this important legislation .

ⁱ Medicaid Coverage of Community Health Worker Services <https://www.macpac.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Medicaid-coverage-of-community-health-worker-services-1.pdf>